

# CANDIDATURE FOR CENTRAL COUNCIL ELECTION (NORTH) OF ICAI – 2021



## CA. AGARWAL SANJAY KUMAR BALLOT NO. 1

09 November, 2021

To  
The Respected Professional Colleagues,

Subject: Know your candidate by knowing past contributions and manifesto of future agendas

I am **CA. Sanjay Kumar Agarwal (Agarwal Sanjay Kumar, in Ballot Paper)**. I have been in practice since 1986 in Direct Taxes. I identify myself as an academician and administrator. I have been an elected member of the Central Council from 2010 to 2018 and thereafter had my cooling period. In the upcoming December 2021 elections, I am contesting again for the Central Council with possible solutions for modern problems of members.

I am a firm believer that the profession's interest is always above personal interest. Thus, I believe that merit alone should be the basis for any assignment as well as position. Accordingly, I request all **members to vote on merit** rather on the basis of any other consideration.

Here, I would like to highlight my tagline and a track record of over 15 years to back it up **"If you are not in a position to sleep and you think by talking to me you would be able to sleep, then don't think that I am sleeping, just ring me up"**. I have been, am, and will, always be available 24\*7, 365 days of a year, without any break, for my fellow members.

I would request my fellow members to please take out 5 minutes to read through the following communication and exercise their **Right to Know their Candidate**.

During my previous stint in the Central Council, I have made humongous contributions in every committee irrespective of whether I was a chairperson, vice-chairperson, or a member. Out of the huge list, **certain major contributions**, for which I can fully take credit for, during my stint in Central Council as well as the Chairman of NIRC, are as under:

- Founded "Voice of CA" in 2009, a platform for networking, professional updates, webinars, and seminars.

- Introduced E-Sahaayataa - an Online Central Grievance Cell of ICAI which resolved 5-6L queries without any subsequent intervention – telephonic or otherwise. It had features like replying to the query raised/posed within 72 hours, quick escalation to President’s desk, multiple re-opening of queries with escalation to the next level.
- Initiated Live Web Cast on Union Budget.
- Facilitated introduction of E-filing of Tax Audit Reports u/s 44AB.
- Saved crores by sending marksheets to unsuccessful students by ordinary post instead of speed post.
- Finalised on behalf of ICAI for the GoI, the scheme to regulate grant of membership of ICAI to Overseas Citizens of India - having membership of accounting bodies abroad.
- Authored Report - Vol. 2 (presented to MCA), as a member of High-Powered Committee, which identified issues related to surrogate practices in India, while analysing Satyam Scam. Later, referred by the Hon’ble Supreme Court in the case of S. Sukumar v. The Secretary, ICAI (CA No. 2422 of 2018).
- Finalised the report in Nagpur Land Matter by taking tough stand, saving a huge amount of ICAI.
- Conceptualised Self Service Portal (SSP).
- Introduced Multi Utility Seminar Tag (MUST) to obviate long queues for attendance at Seminars and automating credit of CPE hours.
- Introduced “Vacancy/Employment Opportunities” Column in NIRC Newsletter.

Please find details of **other contributions** and of the **positions held** in various committees of the Central Council, in the attached **Annexures 1 and 2**.

Going forward, and in appreciation of **right to know as to ‘what is my vision for the profession’s tomorrow’**, I give below the **bullet points of the manifesto** of my future agendas. My USP is that every bullet point is backed by a step-by-step methodology for its execution. Please find attached a **summarised methodology for execution** in **Annexure 3**:

1. To bring in **transparency in council affairs** deliberations by introducing measures like ‘live webcast of council meetings’, mechanism for answerability of Council members and introduction of **‘Dil Se Dil Ki Baat with the Council Members’** online on a periodical basis.
2. To propose an **Amendment in CA Act** to define & enlarge role/scope of CA including exclusivity of certain domains, immunity from investigation/prosecution while providing professional services, liberalising advertisement/promotion clause for non-attest functions.
3. To set up **Skill Development Centre (SDC)** for imparting project specific **practical training**. To extend it to every corner of the country by **involving all regional councils and branches**.
4. To set up a **Research and Development Wing** under the independent charge of world-renowned accounting professionals for **exploring newer areas/opportunities** for members.
5. To restore/enhance the **profession’s dignity** by **partnering** with government/industry/ stakeholders to increasingly interact with them on accounting, taxation, and fiscal laws leading to further **financial literacy, better awareness and appreciation of CA profession** and **rapport building**.
6. To promote **networking among Indian Firms** by liberalising networking guidelines and SDC to assist members aspiring to create such networks.
7. To launch a **Mentorship Program** where established firms will mentor newer firms for specified assignments which would add to the experience of both the firms.
8. To have a dedicated **Software Development Wing** under SDC for developing accounting, taxation and other softwares for members, exploring AI opportunities, under ICAI ownership.
9. To pursue for **Convocation Ceremony** of recently qualified CAs (2019 onwards).
10. To **digitise membership cards** by uploading it with a digital signature on the SSP.
11. To enable **Indian Practitioners to practice outside of India** and sharpen their skills under SDC.
12. To **revive/re-energize e-sahaayataa** for quick grievance redressal. To **extend it** to address grievances of members and students with business entities/government authorities and vice versa.

13. To work for phase-wise implementation of **'Mandatory Fee Structure'** in tenders exclusive for CAs, to improve profession's image and to curb unrealistic/low fees financial tendering.
14. To develop a **portal for posting and applying for project sub-letting**. This would include a special feature for **part-time projects only for women practitioners**.
15. To set up the **concept of 'Official spokesperson(s)' for each region and subject** for advocating, debating, and **defending the profession** before the media/stakeholders. These spokespersons would be responsible to provide inputs and may also act as a **subject specialist to the President, ICAI**.
16. To update GMCS curriculum to acquaint members with their **constitutional and professional rights/obligations**.
17. To further create a mechanism to bridge **the inflow of students and their outflow as qualified CAs**.
18. To **restructure COP fees** by making the mandatory fees symbolic and **linking UDIN generation with a minimal fee** of say INR 10 or 20, to bring in parity and correlation between the income of the practitioners and fees paid.
19. To represent to the government for **earmarking certain jobs/roles only for CAs**.
20. To introduce **non-practicing allowance** for members in government sector/PSEs.
21. To **reconstruct the articleship structure** for the students who aim to go into **service or practice** with an option to shift from one to another category on related special training. Also dividing the training into **pre and post qualification** like doctors to encourage specialisation right from the start.

In the agendas above, I have tried to cater to the **Voice** of the fellow members and if you have any suggestions/views to improve upon, they are always welcome. Please write to me at [sanjay@casanjay.in](mailto:sanjay@casanjay.in) or call me on **9811080342**, with your suggestions which can also be attended to upon getting elected to **Central Council** with the blessings of your **VOTE and SUPPORT for Ballot No. 1, Central Council (North)**.

Moreover, for the first time the institute has introduced the concept of **'Anywhere Voting'** by providing the facility of changing the polling booth, as desired, within region/outside the region. The details of the scheme are attached in **Annexure 4**.

Furthermore, for the awareness of all, I would like to explain the **structure of the ICAI and the process**, requisites, rules, timings of polling booth, etc. of the **election** in detail in **Annexure 5**.

Please also find enclosed a copy of a crisp overview printed with past contributions, manifesto and vote appeal.

**I would request you to please EXERCISE YOUR RIGHT TO VOTE – KNOW YOUR CANDIDATES, MOVE OUT OF YOUR HOMES AND OFFICES, AND RIGHTFULLY VOTE FOR THE CANDIDATE OF YOUR CHOICE.**

**Warm Regards,**

**CA. AGARWAL SANJAY KUMAR**  
**BALLOT NO. 1 for CENTRAL COUNCIL (NORTH) of ICAI**

## Annexure-1

### Detail of Other Past Contributions

- Putting in place a single form for direct tax return under the Direct Taxes Code.
- Efforts resulting in Audits u/s 44AD and 44AE not to be counted for 'specified number of tax audit assignments'
- Procedure for dealing with matters of non-appointment of an eligible outgoing auditor *vis-à-vis* incoming auditor harmonized.
- Introduction of Background Material for students taking revisionary classes at Institute.
- Maintenance of informal 3Cs Register to record the Complaints, Comments and Compliments of students and members.
- Opening of Reading Room in North Delhi at Rohini.
- Mooting the idea for an online inventory management system for the Institute to save stationery costs and to make it eco-friendly, now called CDS.
- Streamlined disciplinary mechanism to reduce pendency of cases.
- Authored various books like Tax Audit u/s 44AB of Income Tax Act, 1961, Handbook on Practical Aspects of Direct Taxes, Indirect Taxes and Other Laws, Survey, Search and Seizure under Income Tax Act, Periodic Digest of relevant judgements of Supreme Court/ High Courts/ ITAT, etc.
- Setting up of Cyber Cell in the Institute which ascertains the veracity of allegations of frauds on the members.
- Speaker/Chief Guest/Faculty in over 3000 Seminars/Webinars/Conferences around the globe.
- Nominated by ICAI Council to committees for Addressing and Managing issue of Black Money.
- Implementation of MIS Reporting at ICAI branches and Chapters through Software.
- Greater and Increased reliance on the members through newer/additional requirements, e.g. Form3CD - representation to the concerned authorities.
- Websites of Branches of NIRC were launched and the NIRC website was made more informative and interactive. Further, e-mail communications were increasingly resorted to facilitate and build strong liaison with one and all.
- For their efficient functioning, Branches were monitored regularly, and an appropriate liaison was maintained.
- To avoid/eliminate any waiting period, multiple batches of the course on General Management and Communication Skills were concurrently run for the benefit of students.
- Nominated by the NIRC of the ICAI as Convener/Joint Convener on its Taxation Study Group almost consecutively for five years during 1998-99 — 2003-04.
- Conferred by the NIRC of the ICAI 'Best Convener Award' for the year 2000-01 and 2003-04.
- Articles on the subjects of Search, Penalty, Prosecution and MAT contributed, were published in the NIRC Newsletter.
- Background Material contributed on 'Overview of the Income Tax Settlement Commission', 'Income Tax Appellate Tribunal' and 'Survey, Search & Seizure', published by the NIRC of the ICAI.
- Conduct of progressively increasing number of seminars etc. by Committees through webinar/webcast.
- Organising Workshops on issues relating to CPC and E-filing.
- To facilitate better understanding, conducted practical demonstrations with role plays by members and students. The most popular ones being — 'Play on Survey, Search and Seizure under Income Tax' (also available on youtube) and 'Mock Tribunal'.

## Annexure-2

### Detail of Positions Held

Consequent to the election to the Central Council first in 2010 and re-election in 2013 and 2016, I had the opportunity of serving various 'Standing', 'Non-Standing' and 'Other' Committees of the Central Council. I served on almost all the Committees as **Chairman**, **Vice-Chairman** or Member. The details are as under:

- Chairman of Research Committee (2018-19)
- Chairman of Taxation Audits Quality Review Board (2018-19)
- Chairman of Corporate Laws & Corporate Governance Committee (2017-18)
- Chairman of Legal Coordination Committee (2016-17)
- Chairman of Digital Transformation & Process Reengineering Committee (2016-17)
- Chairman of Committee on Economic, Commercial Laws & WTO (2014-15)
- Chairman of Indirect Taxes Committee (2013-14)
- Chairman of Public Relations Committee (2013-14)
- Chairman of Direct Taxes Committee (2011-12, 2012-13, 2017-18).
- Vice-Chairman of Committee on Economic, Commercial Laws & Economic Advisory (2018-19)
- Vice-Chairman of Direct Taxes Committee (2015-16)
- Vice-Chairman of Committee on Public Finance and Government Accounting (2015-16)
- Vice-Chairman of Committee on Cooperatives and NPO Sectors (2015-16)
- Vice-Chairman of Expert Advisory Committee (2014-15)
- Vice-Chairman of Committee on Information Technology (2013-14)
- Vice-Chairman of Audit Committee (2012-13).

I also served as the **Chairman of NIRC of ICAI (2004-2005)** i.e., the very first year on becoming an elected regional council member.

The details of the committees in which I was a member, nominated member, or ICAI representative are as follows:

### Council Year 2010-11

#### Member

- Finance Committee
- Committee on Auditing Standards for Local Bodies
- Indirect Taxes Committee
- Committee on Information Technology
- Committee on International Taxation
- Vision Perspective Planning Committee

### Council Year 2011-12

#### Member

- Committee on Banking, Insurance & Pension
- Committee for Capacity Building of CA Firms and Small and Medium Practitioners
- Continuing Professional Education Committee
- Expert Advisory Committee
- Ind AS (IFRS) Implementation Committee
- Indirect Taxes Committee

- Committee on Information Technology
- Committee on International Taxation
- Committee on Management Accounting
- Committee for Members in Industry
- Professional Development Committee

#### Council Year 2012-13

##### Member

- Committee on Banking, Insurance & Pension
- Committee for Capacity Building of CA Firms and Small and Medium Practitioners
- Continuing Professional Education Committee
- Committee for Cooperative & NPO Sectors
- Expert Advisory Committee
- Ind AS (IFRS) Implementation Committee
- Indirect Taxes Committee
- Committee on Information Technology
- Committee on International Taxation
- Committee on Management Accounting
- Committee for Members in Industry
- Professional Development Committee

#### Council Year 2013-14

##### Member

- Direct Taxes Committee
- Disciplinary Committee [under Section 21B]
- Editorial Board
- Expert Advisory Committee
- Committee on International Taxation
- Committee on Management Accounting
- Committee for Members in Entrepreneurship & Public Service
- Perspective Planning Committee

#### Council Year 2014-15

##### Member

- Committee on Banking, Insurance & Pension
- Continuing Professional Education Committee
- Direct Taxes Committee
- Disciplinary Committee [under Section 21B]
- Ind AS (IFRS) Implementation Committee
- Indirect Taxes Committee
- Committee on Information Technology
- Public Relations Committee
- Research Committee
- Strategy and Perspective Planning Committee
- Technology Development Committee
- Women Members Empowerment Committee

## Council Year 2015-16

### Member

- Finance Committee
- Examination Committee
- Disciplinary Committee [under Section 21D]  
[Standing Invitee to assist it in disposing off the outstanding matters particularly in relation to the GTB]
- Accounting Standards Board
- Expert Advisory Committee
- International Affairs Committee
- Committee for Capacity Building of Members in Practice
- Continuing Professional Education Committee
- Corporate Laws & Corporate Governance Committee
- Corporate Social Responsibility Committee
- Committee on Economic, Commercial Laws & WTO
- Committee for Members in Industry
- Professional Development Committee

## Council Year 2016-17

### Member

- Accounting Standards Board
- Continuing Professional Education Committee
- Corporate Laws & Corporate Governance Committee
- Direct Taxes Committee
- Editorial Board
- Ethical Standards Board
- Financial Reporting Review Board
- International Affairs Committee
- Committee on International Taxation
- Professional Development Committee
- Public Relations Committee
- Women Members Empowerment Committee

## Council Year 2017-18

### Member

- Committee for Cooperatives and NPO Sectors
- Committee on Economic Laws & WTO and Economic Advisory
- Editorial Board
- Coordination Committee with Sister Institutes
- Indirect Taxes Committee
- International Affairs Committee
- Committee on International Taxation
- Professional Development Committee
- Public Relations and CSR Committee
- Infrastructure Development Committee
- Committee for Members in Entrepreneurship and Public Service
- HR Transformation Group
- Digital Transformation and Process Reengineering Group

- Disciplinary Committee (Under Sec. 21B) Bench 2

#### Council Year 2018-19

##### Member

- Accounting Standards Board
- Committee on Accounting Standards for Local Bodies
- Banking, Financial Services and Insurance Committee
- Continuing Professional Education Committee
- Direct Taxes Committee
- Expert Advisory Committee
- Coordination Committee with Sister Institutes
- Indirect Taxes Committee
- International Affairs Committee
- Committee on International Taxation
- HR Transformation Group
- Digital Transformation and Process Reengineering Group
- Legal Coordination Group
- Disciplinary Committee (u/s 21B) Bench 1 & 3

Besides the above, on being nominated, I [represented the Council](#), among others, on —

- Regional Advisory Committee constituted on Central Excise & Service Tax by the Commissionerate of Customs, Central Excise and Service Tax, Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance.
- Standing Committee on TDS, Ministry of Finance
- Committee formed by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs to identify the tax issues arising out of convergence between the Companies Act, 1956, IFRS, DTC and GST, and matters related thereto

Further, the Council also [nominated me on its various groups/other committees](#) etc. constituted from time to time to study and formulate recommendations on specified critical issues, which includes the following:

- Information Technology Initiated Group
- Central Grievances Redress Cell
- Identification of a suitable incumbent for the position of Secretary, ICAI
- Digitisation of Balance Sheet and Annual Reports
- Determining cadre strength of regular employees of the ICAI
- Project Parivartan Monitoring (resulted in conceptualisation of Self Service Portal)
- Revised Scheme for electronic filing through intermediaries
- Restructuring of the Certificate Course on Arbitration
- Review of Education and Training [CRET]
- High Powered Committee on Satyam Fiasco
- Examination Reform Committee
- Election Reform Committee
- Review of Disciplinary mechanism of ICAI
- Revision of Tax Management Diploma Course
- Group on UDIN
- Issues relating to formation of LLP CA Firms and formation of Multi-Disciplinary Partnerships [MDPs] and to suggest solution thereto



### Annexure 3

#### Summary of Methodology for execution of Future Agendas:

**All the propositions made above are backed by well-thought methodologies. They are summarised as follows:**

- 1. To bring in transparency in council affairs deliberations by introducing measures like 'live webcast of council meetings', mechanism for answerability of Council Members and introduction of 'Dil Se Dil Ki Baat with the Council Members' online on a periodical basis.**

I believe that members have the right to know the planning and policies the council is considering. Thus, I am of the view that to bring in transparency in the workings of the Council, webcast of Council Meetings other than on critical matter like exams, needs to be arranged. Suggestions and inputs of the members can also be considered for the same. The methodology to achieve the same is as follows:

- SSP Portal will generate an automated mail/SMS along with the link whenever a meeting is scheduled for live webcast.
- This mail shall also update the members of the Agendas that are being scheduled for discussion in the meeting. Such communication of agenda should be made at least 7 days before the date of a Council Meeting. However, any additional agendas may be available as and when brought to the table of the Council. (This shall not be applicable for regular committee meetings)
- The members will be able to login with their IDs into their SSP to view the meeting live or can view the recorded meeting later, on the link to be made available on the SSP. Post the meeting, the Minutes of the Meeting (excluding critical matters) could also be uploaded on ICAI website for members' reference.

To further the transparency agenda, I would also like to initiate 'Dil Se Dil Ki Baat' on a quarterly basis with the President, Vice President and other Council Members of the Institute online, to respond to the queries of the members, to address their issues and redress their grievances. This can be added as a feature to SSP Portal where the members can log into the portal for the online meeting with the Council and have a 2-way conversation.

These measures will make the Council Members more accountable and answerable to the people who voted them and would in turn lead to member's voices being heard.

- 2. To propose an Amendment in CA Act to define & enlarge the role/scope of a CA including exclusivity of certain domains, immunity from investigation/prosecution while providing professional services and liberalising advertisement/promotion clause for non-attest functions.**

Currently, the Chartered Accountants are seen as soft targets. The following major reasons for the same are noteworthy:

- It is nowhere defined 'What is the role, scope and domain of a chartered accountant' and 'What a CA can or cannot do as a professional'.
- The advertisement/promotion clauses are very restrictive on the profession as a whole, even in non-attest functions which are also undertaken by other professionals and non-professionals. Here, a member is not in a position to compete with others who are advertising and promoting these non-attest services.

- Further, there is no clause for protection of Chartered Accountants from investigation and prosecution in the matters concerning the genuine professional services provided by the member.

**Both these issues can be dealt with, by making the following small amendments in the 'The Chartered Accountants Act, 1949':**

- Amendment in CA Act in **Section 2** by defining the role and scope of the Chartered Accountants.
- Amendment in CA Act by inserting a protection clause under existing **section 30D - Protection of action taken in good faith**, for the members from investigation and prosecution in case of genuine professional services provided.
- Amendment in CA Act in **Section 2** by making certain domains including due diligence, restructuring, internal audits and the likes exclusive only for Chartered Accountants. A corresponding amendment in existing **Section 25** – Companies not to engage in accountancy, to curb surrogate practices.
- Amendment in advertisement/promotion clause for non-attest functions by liberalising these clauses whereby there shall be no restriction on Indian CA firms to advertise or promote their non-attest services on par with their competitors subject to certain conditions like 'not using the word Chartered Accountants'.

These amendments would give a level playing field to the members, would reduce surrogate practices, will give a little more room especially to new firms to survive and stabilise in the competitive environment, will protect CAs from unwarranted harassment by authorities and will uphold the dignity of the profession like olden days.

### **3. To set up Skill Development Centre (SDC) for imparting project specific practical training. To extend it to every corner of the country by involving all regional councils and branches.**

I have come across cases where young members feel that whenever they start their own practice, expand their practice into another field or in the initial years of their careers, they fell short of skills required for executing assignments. To resolve this issue, I propose setting up a fully equipped Skill Development Centre for conducting practical hands-on training required for execution of specified assignments, and to extend such centres to every corner of the country by involving all regional councils and branches.

SDC will aim at providing practical hands-on experience to CAs who are trying to learn a new skill or are trying to expand their horizon into another field. For example, where a newly qualified CA wants to start practicing in GST compliance, but during articleship, s/he had no such related exposure, may simply enrol into the GST compliance program of the SDC, which will provide practical training on preparing returns, filing returns, reviewing annual returns, process of GST registration, etc.

Further, I also propose launching a special feature in the Skill Development Centre's portal of taking a 'personality test' designed by renowned personalities, which will help understand the core skills a professional possesses, to identify their USPs and the skills they need to learn/hone. This test will also identify the opportunities which would better fit. The outcome of the test would be confidential too. This would lead to professionals being able to harness the skills they possess to the fullest and be also aware of the other skills they need to develop, leading to personal and professional development of all members.

The methodology for execution of these programs would be as follows:

- These training sessions will be more interactive, Q/A and application based rather than bookish knowledge.

- To encourage experienced professionals to share, pass on their knowledge and train those interested. Besides, those participating in such training will be rewarded with suitable CPE hours.
- To reach every corner of the country, I aim at involving all regional councils and branches at every level for execution of the programs that may be launched by SDC and to provide their inputs to launch specific programs or improve existing programs as per the specific needs of the members in their region/branch.

**4. To set up a Research and Development Wing under the independent charge of world-renowned accounting professionals/other professionals for exploring newer areas/opportunities for members.**

Research is the future. We hear very often members asking that how the Institute plans to utilise the huge accumulated funds it has. In my vision, gone are the days when growth meant having more buildings and offices. Now the time is to save the profession and to re-instate and strengthen the faith of the society in the profession just like olden days. It is time to invest in research that would add value to the profession and will help create opportunities for young CAs.

I envision setting up a fully equipped Research and Development Wing under the independent charge of world-renowned accounting professionals and other professionals for researching new opportunities and areas where members can contribute. The methodology to achieve this would be as follows:

- The Wing's main function would be to study and analyse the market and industry in the private as well as government sector to find out new professional/business opportunities. For example, we can find a new opportunity as well as add value to the society by offering services to government and industry in reviving/reinvigorating government PSUs and other dying industries. ICAI can undertake research in relation to a segment of dying or non-performing industries, identify related causes and can go to the government with a plan that may result in revival. This would prove to be a double-edged sword of improving the reputation of the profession as well as creation of new opportunities for young CAs.
- This wing will collect data, perform critical analysis, and prepare reports of the opportunities explored.
- The young professionals would then be made aware of the new professional/business opportunities and would be trained under the 'Skill Development Centre' ('SDC') Initiative. SDC would enable them to deliver such assignments by guiding the young professionals on structure of the organisation, physical and human resource utilisation, etc.
- Further, another responsibility of this Wing will be to conduct research and collate data on the role and responsibilities of accounting professionals across the world and adjust them to the factors in the nation. This research could then be used to formulate suggestions for the government in order to emphasise that the opportunities, available to, and the expectations from our members are as per global standards.

**5. To restore/enhance the profession's dignity by partnering with government/industry/stakeholders to increasingly interact with them on accounting, taxation, and fiscal laws leading to further financial literacy, better awareness and appreciation of CA profession and rapport building:**

Currently, the perception is that the image of the profession is downward. The image being formed is not depicting the actual hard work, struggles and efforts our fraternity puts in to keep the economy afloat. Thus, this agenda is primary in my manifesto. The methodology to restore and enhance the dignity of the

profession in the eyes of government, bureaucrats, and business entities with the dual motive of financial literacy for all, is as follows:

- Identifying various departments of the ministries and industry representatives. Then contacting them to partner for webinars, meetings, conferences, seminars, interactions, etc. in each such department and industry for advocating and promoting financial literacy.
- Content for every meeting would be specially curated to cater the needs of a given department or industry along with certain common do's and don'ts of accounting, taxation and finance which will be useful in everyday life. For example, special sessions on individual investments, using common accounting/taxation tools, filing of returns, understanding share market, analysis of finance and other budgets, etc. This content would also include a portion whereby awareness about our Institute, the skills that Chartered Accountants possess, the services/expertise they can render/provide, and the like, is spread.
- The initial round of meetings would help establish rapport with these departments and industries and would lead to financial literacy for all. Post this, a series of meetings can be organised to demonstrate the skills and expertise of our members by means of fairs, interactions, role plays, conferences, and the like.
- Further, such regular interactions would help understand any possible gap between the vision of the government, and delivery of services by, our profession. Once any such gap is identified as to what the authorities require from the profession, necessary remedial practical measures can be initiated to bridge the same and to propagate this vision in the fraternity.
- Furthermore, to improve the image of the profession in the industry, we can add value to the businesses by providing comments on optimisation of resources to the management.

This course of action will speak for itself that CAs are not mere watchdogs but that they add a lot of value, thereby help us restore/enhance the dignity of the profession.

**6. To promote networking among Indian CA Firms by liberalising networking guidelines and SDC to assist members aspiring to create such networks.**

Today, the networking guidelines are very restrictive and give no room for the Indian CA Firms to collaborate in a form of a network to consolidate and emerge bigger. Unfortunately, most small and medium practitioners are unaware of these norms and of even the very concept of networking. However, I believe that "networking" is the key to survival in the foreseeable future.

Thus, I propose liberalising the networking guidelines to an extent that it encourages Indian Firms to form networks to compete Multinationals.

Furthermore, the Skill Development Centre ('SDC') would contribute by creating awareness around the concept and on networking guidelines. SDC will also assist young members in strategizing the structure of the organisation and around the pre-requisites of networking. This would inspire more and more members/firms to join hands.

**7. To launch a Mentorship Program where established firms will mentor newer firms for specified assignments which would add to the experience of both the firms.**

Our young members struggle for years on, to gain the kind of work and experience they intended. This, for many, is a struggle for survival in this highly competitive environment. In order to redress the

difficulties faced by new practitioners and to smoothen their path, I would like to propose a mentorship program. The features of the program will include:

- Desirous Newer firms, aged upto 7 years post qualification, will get allotted a mentor firm with a particular experience criterion.
- These mentor firms will associate with these newer firms to mentor them for specified assignments, as offered in the program (for example, bank audits).
- Both the firms will have a written/signed understanding/agreement between them where both agree to with strict clauses for poaching and other unethical practices in interest of all.
- We would recommend the government to consider adding the completed assignments to the profile/experience of the newer firms as well as established firms and both the firms/members would be equally responsible for the assignment. This methodology is akin to stock exchanges where established brokers mentor newer brokers.

This process would help the newer firms to build a standing as well as to gain the right experience for empanelling for bank audits and other assignments, sooner than usual. However, this step should be introduced in consonance with the mandatory fees structure for tenders reserved only for CA members (read the details of the same in Point 13 below).

**8. To have a dedicated Software Development Wing under SDC for developing accounting, taxation and other softwares for members, exploring AI opportunities, under ICAI ownership.**

In the past we have experienced that the Institute gets into association with various private software/tool providers who give huge discounts to our members at the initial stages of entering into association. Once the member gets familiar/used to the software/tool, the prices of these tools rise sky high as the initial/discounted rates are at the discretion of the software provider and not the Institute.

Thus, I propose SDC to have its own 'Software Development Wing' which will develop accounting softwares, return filing softwares and other daily use softwares which are required by members day in and day out and will then provide them at nominal cost to members, to enable them access to quality softwares for ease of doing practice. These softwares and their periodic upgradation, would remain under the ownership of the ICAI, which would ensure continuous service to the members.

**9. To pursue for Convocation Ceremony of recently qualified CAs (2019 onwards).**

**10. To digitise membership cards by uploading it with a digital signature on the SSP.**

In the last few months, I came across a common grievance with the newly qualified CAs that was delay in receiving membership cards and consequently facing difficulties to enter tax departments/courts.

To mitigate the same, I made a representation to the Hon'ble President, ICAI, for digitising and automating membership cards. In line with the same, I propose to mitigate this issue once and for all.

The membership card allotment will be automated as follows:

- The member would make an application for the membership number.
- Within 5 days of approval of the application, a coloured copy of the membership card with a digital signature would be uploaded on the SSP Portal for the members.
- A member can login with his/her user ID into SSP and can press the button for downloading membership card. The said action of downloading would then send a validation OTP on the registered mobile phone of the member (to maintain integrity).

- Members can download the membership card as many times required alike Aadhar Card.
- Once the card is downloaded it can be duly printed and laminated and then will be acceptable as a proof of membership.
- There would also be an option to apply for a hard copy of the membership card specifically on payment of courier charges, which will then be sent to the member by courier.

#### **11. To enable Indian Practitioners to practice outside of India and sharpen their skills under SDC.**

Everywhere I go I hear young members asking me ‘How can we compete with global firms?’, ‘Can’t we somehow stop them to get into our professional arena?’.

These questions need two-fold answers, one of which I have already answered in Point 2 above, where I proposed an amendment in CA Act for exclusivity of certain domains only for CA members and to define the scope of the professional services of a CA.

However, the second fold of the answer lies in my proposal to enable Indian Practitioners to practice in foreign countries by entering into understanding/agreements with accounting bodies abroad and developing/repurposing the skills of Indian Practitioners to a level that cater the needs of foreign clients.

#### **12. To revive/re-energise e-sahaayataa for quick grievance redressal. To extend it to address grievances of members and students with business entities/government authorities and vice versa.**

During my 1<sup>st</sup> term in 2010, I had formulated a mechanism called E-Sahaayataa which is an Online Central Grievance Redressal Cell available on the ICAI website. This Cell resolved queries of all the members and students online within 72 hours without any telephonic or physical contact with the members/students. I had the charge of the said Cell for 6 years (from 2010 to 2015) and during this span, this portal solved at least 5-6 lacs queries successfully. It had salient features like:

- Multiple re-opening facility with escalation with each re-opening,
- Quick escalation to President’s Desk if the query is not solved within 72 hours, and
- Answerability of departments responsible for resolving/closing the query, etc.

Recently, it came to notice that the Cell has not been working efficiently. I aim at reviving/re-energising it to make it more efficient. I also propose to add latest features to the tool to make it up-to-date and a one-stop grievance redressal solution. I would like to see the system self-sufficient. This Cell will automatically address the pertinent issue of members that ‘no one picks up telephones at the institute’.

I also propose to extend E-Sahaayataa for protection of members from any possible exploitation by business entities and government authorities, which would be executed in the following matter:

- To open another wing to the existing set-up where a legal committee/team under an independent charge would be established for protection.
- The members would be able to send in their grievances online itself on the portal.
- The assigned team would follow up with the members within 24 hours to apprise them of the legal and professional remedies available under law and would connect them with the right empanelled professionals to redress their grievance.

I further propose to extend it in the same manner for government authorities, business entities or any individual to be able to raise grievances, if any, with the Institute or its members.

**13. To work for phase wise implementation of 'Mandatory Fee Structure' in tenders exclusive for CAs, to improve profession's image and to curb unrealistic/low fees financial tendering.**

So far there has just been a recommendation on the minimum fees. However, given the circumstances in which the profession is today, 'mandatory fee structure' for tenders exclusive only for CAs is necessary. This would curb unrealistic/low fees tendering.

Moreover, quoting lower or minimal fees is leading to monopolistic and unhealthy practices. Thus, a minimum mandatory fee for certain types of assignment and industries, need to be stipulated by the Institute.

This can be implemented by having a disciplinary action on the members, if fees lower than stipulated, is quoted/charged.

**14. To develop a portal for posting and applying for project sub-letting, wherever permitted. This would include a special feature for part-time projects only for women practitioners.**

The younger members have constantly raised issues on 'how to find work during initial stages?' and 'how to sustain in this competitive environment?', as discussed in points above.

To tackle these questions, it is necessary to develop and put in place an online portal which will aggregate the members looking, and finding partners/associates, for project subletting in a given assignment. This would give a chance to new firms to tap assignments which other firms do not have the bandwidth to handle at any point in time. This would also, to some extent, provide a level playing field.

I also envision to cater the women practitioners who have to leave work altogether due to their personal commitments. Thus, this portal would have a special section for women who want to take up part-time projects and for members to post such part-time projects. This would enable such women practitioners to stay in touch with the profession, work at their convenience and manage their personal commitments.

**15. To set up the concept of 'Official spokesperson(s)' for each region and subject for advocating, debating, and defending the profession before the media/stakeholders. These spokespersons would be responsible to provide inputs and may also act as a subject specialist to the President, ICAI.**

During my previous tenure in the Council, I noticed that no person – an elected member or otherwise, in particular was designated/responsible for propagating/advocating the profession at various fronts and to assist the President of the ICAI on subjects the member has expertise in.

Thus, I propose that from within the Council, Spokespersons for each of diverse subjects/expertise, and from/for every region, should be appointed/designated. Such Spokespersons would be responsible to represent the allocated subject/region for promotion of, and where necessary defending the interests of profession. These spokespersons would represent the Institute in their regions to advance the profession as discussed in some detail in Point 5 above.

Further, these spokespersons will act as the subject specialist and will bring in respective matters to the Hon'ble President of the Institute. The President may also consult these spokespersons on matters involving their subject/region, for effective working of the Institute.

**16. To update and fine tune GMCS curriculum to acquaint members with their constitutional and professional rights/obligations.**

In the present-day context, generally the members are apprehensive of being charged with unfounded allegations, and/or of being harassed by clients or investigating authorities.

Our members shall not be a scapegoat anymore. Thus, to strengthen the position of our members, I propose to fine tune the curriculum for the students/pass out of the CA Final Examination in GMCS in order to incorporate a few articles of the Constitution which are regularly used and a class on professional rights in case of any harassment/any undue advantage sought to be taken by clients, employer, employees, investigating authorities, etc.

**17. To further create a mechanism to bridge the inflow of students and their outflow as qualified CAs.**

It has been a persistent issue in the profession that the gap between the inflow of students entering the Course and their outflow as qualified Chartered Accountants is ever increasing.

This leads to huge inventory of students in the profession struggling for years to be able to start their careers. Thus, I propose a mechanism which would make the inflow to the profession as tough as qualifying the course along with other smaller steps like:

- Streamlining the correct answers to the question papers and transparency for the same.
- Updating the structure of the training as discussed below in Point 21.

**18. To restructure COP fees by making the mandatory fees symbolic and linking UDIN generation with a minimal fee of say INR 10 or 20 to bring in parity and correlation between the income of the practitioners and fees paid.**

I noticed that members are disappointed by the fact that those in the initial stages of their practice or in difficult times have to pay COP fees on par with seniors and members with established practices. To mitigate this, we need to have a mechanism which provides for some correlation between the income of practitioner and fees paid. This can be achieved by restructuring the COP fees in the following manner:

- A symbolic mandatory COP fees would be set for every practitioner which would be paid using the existing process via SSP Portal.
- Thereafter, a minimal fee of say INR 10 or INR 20 would be linked with UDIN generation by any practitioner. This fee would be charged by the system each time a practitioner generates a UDIN and this would be credited to the institute in lieu of the COP fees.

This would bring in parity in the COP fees paid by different practitioners *vis-à-vis* the income of/professional services rendered by them.

**19. To represent to the government for earmarking certain jobs/roles only for CAs.**

There are no opportunities earmarked only for Chartered Accountants in government/its agencies. I believe that it is in the interest of all, that certain roles which CAs can best perform are earmarked for them.

Thus, in consonance with the other measures proposed to create newer opportunities for our members, I propose a representation by the Institute to the government to identify roles/areas like finance, audit, taxation, investment, etc. and earmark them to be helmed/manned only by CAs. These subjects/areas are



the strongholds of our members. This would increase CA representation in the government and its agencies and would also create more jobs for our members.

**20. To introduce non-practicing allowance for members in government sector/PSEs.**

Members choosing to be in service – whether in government/PSEs or corporate – have been doing exceedingly well over the years. As a result, a number of our members today are at the helm of affairs. However, having regard to their capacity built over years in diverse fields and the skill sets added from time to time, they have both the ability and the means to share their expertise outside of their employers. But they are unable to do so on account mainly of prohibiting rules in place. In the backdrop of this position, I propose that the Institute may take up the matter with the Government/SCOPE/PSSB/other concerned authorities to mandate Non-Practicing Allowance to Chartered Accountants in Service in government sector.

**21. To reconstruct the articleship structure for the students who aim to go into service or practice with an option to shift from one to another category on related special training. Also dividing the training into pre and post qualification like doctors to encourage specialisation right from the start.**

Our students do a tiring training structure of 3 years during which they have to balance studies as well as work. This at times leads students to resort to avoiding training by various methods. Moreover, when a student chooses to go into service after qualifying, they face trouble adjusting to the corporate environment and the skills required to survive and succeed in a corporate environment. This is also true for those students who choose to go into practice after qualifying as they struggle to explore and find gainful opportunities.

This makes it imperative for certain restructuring in the articleship scheme:

- The articleship should be divided into pre-qualification and post-qualification just like in the case of students pursuing medicine. This would encourage young members to specialise in the chosen field, right from the start. This would also reduce the duration for which a student has to undergo training before appearing for final examination.
- Further, the articleship should also provide for specialised training for students aiming to go into service to imbibe them with the skills required in service.
- Similarly, students aiming to go into practice may train specifically to deal with clients and should be imbued with revenue generation skills.
- I also propose to have the option for the student or professional to shift from service to practice and vice versa, on undertaking a specially designed training which would imbibe required skills specific to service or practice, whichever is chosen.

## Annexure 4

### Process of change of Polling Booth

**As per institute notification dated 14-10-2021, the manner for changing Polling Booth address by the members, who are eligible to vote for upcoming ICAI Elections on 3rd and/or 4th December, 2021, has been announced.**

Before changing the Polling Booth Address, the member can easily find their assigned Polling Booth details at <https://appforms.icaai.org/elections/knowyourbooth2021.html>.

We have prepared a short video on 'How to find your polling booth'. You can find it at <https://youtu.be/p5ihoDmYkBs>

If you want to change your assigned Polling Booth to another Polling Booth outside your region, then the Last Date is 11<sup>th</sup> November, 2021.

If you want to change your assigned Polling Booth to another Polling Booth within your region, then the Last Date is 18<sup>th</sup> November, 2021.

To Change your Polling Booth please click: <https://changebooth.icaai.org/>

For the Benefit of all we have prepared a **step-by-step video** for changing of Polling Booth with instructions at <https://youtu.be/rXBdilsxo7E>.

**Exercise your RIGHT TO VOTE.**

## Annexure 5

### ICAI Structure and Election Process

For the benefit of first-time voter, I would like to explain the ICAI structure below:

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India has 2 councils – CENTRAL and REGIONAL.

There is 1 CENTRAL COUNCIL with seats divided in 5 regions – North, East, West, Centre, South, as per the no. of members in the region.

The Central Council has 40 Members (32 elected members + 8 government nominees)

Out of the 32 seats for which members vote and elect, 6 seats are available in the North Region.

There are 5 REGIONAL COUNCILS –

- Northern India Regional Council (NIRC)
- Central India Regional Council (CIRC)
- Eastern India Regional Council (EIRC)
- Western India Regional Council (WIRC)
- Southern India Regional Council (SIRC)

Members registered in North Region will vote for electing members in Central Council (North) as well as NIRC. The members will receive 2 Ballot Papers at the time of voting – 1 for Central Council (North) and 1 for Regional Council. Members may put their first preference to the most preferred candidate, second preference to the next preferred candidate and so on.

The members will have to carry a photo identity card for voting like ICAI membership card or Aadhar Card. The timings of the voting at the polling booths are 8AM to 7PM as per rules.

Please note the Grounds for declaring ballot papers invalid below:

- (a) if a voter signs his name or writes any word or figure upon it or makes any mark including a tick (✓)/ cross (x), not being a mark of 'x' put under clause (c) of sub-rule (2) of rule 20, upon it by which the ballot paper becomes recognizable or by which the voter can be identified; or
- (b) if it is not printed by or under the authority of the Council or is different in any manner from the ballot papers printed under rule 25; or
- (c) if number 1 (in Arabic numerals) is not marked on it; or
- (d) if number 1 (in Arabic numerals) is set opposite the name of more than one candidate; or
- (e) if number 1 (in Arabic numerals) and some other numbers are put opposite the name of the same candidate; or
- (f) if it is unmarked or the marks made are void or cannot be unambiguously determined; or
- (g) if it is so damaged or mutilated that its identity as a genuine ballot paper cannot be established.

You can find other rules at [Chartered Accountants \(Election to the Council\) Rules, 2006 - \(06-09-2021\)](#) and [Gazette Notification - The Chartered Accountants \(Election to Council\) Rules, 2006, amendment vide MCA notification dated 24.08.2021 - \(28-08-2021\)](#) at ICAI website.